

**UNECE****United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

Press Release ECE/ENV/02/06
Geneva, 26 August 2002

World Summit on Sustainable Development

Side event: Participatory democracy and good governance as fundamental tools for a human rights approach to sustainable development

Monday, 26 August 2002, from 1.15 to 2.45 p.m.
Sandton Convention Centre, Ballroom 3

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe organize in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development a side event on "Participatory democracy and good governance as fundamental tools for a human rights approach to sustainable development". It will take place on Monday, 26 August 2002, from 1.15 to 2.45 pm, in the Sandton Convention Centre (Johannesburg), Ballroom 3.

This side event will focus on strengthening environmental rights and their contribution to sustainable development within the framework of good governance, and respect for human rights. It thereby aims to promote the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (in particular principle 10 on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice) and to integrate social and economic development and environmental protection.

The discussions will highlight the importance of an integrated approach to sustainable development and provide an opportunity for participants from different regions to exchange information and perspectives on how the principles of environmental democracy, human rights and good governance in sustainable development may be put into practice, taking the Aarhus Convention¹ as an example of how one region has addressed the issue.

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Ms. Brigita Schmögnerová, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, will chair the discussions and the following panellists will give their views and perspectives on the issues:

Mr. Bozo Kovacevic, Minister of Environment, Croatia

Mr. Olivier Deleuze, Secretary of State for Energy and Sustainable Development, Belgium

Mr. Victor Lichtinger, Minister of Environment, Mexico

Ms. Cheryl Gillwald, Deputy Minister of Justice, South Africa

Ms. Gabriella Dragoni Battaini, Director General, General Directorate for Social Cohesion, Council of Europe

Mr. Alexander Juras, Deputy Executive Director, REC

Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP

Prof. Ben Turok, Member of Parliament Committees: Finances; Trade and Industry, South Africa

Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Ms. Svitlana Kravchenko, European ECO Forum

For further information, please contact:

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¹ The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted in Aarhus, Denmark, in June 1998 and entered into force in October 2001. It has been described by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as 'the most ambitious venture in environmental democracy undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations [whose] adoption was a remarkable step forward in the development of international law'.